development at the grass-roots level in the developing world.

Since 1961, more than 168,000 Americans responded to our nation's call to serve by becoming Peace Corps Volunteers in 136 countries. There are currently 29 volunteers from my district alone who are deployed all over the world, from Kyrgystan to Guatemala.

Mr. Speaker, Peace Corps Volunteers have made significant and lasting contributions around the world in agriculture, business development, education, health and the environment, and have dramatically improved the lives of individuals and communities around the world.

Peace Corps Volunteers have strengthened the ties of friendship and understanding between the people of the United States and those of other countries for 42 years.

President George W. Bush has issued a call to service for all Americans—both at home and abroad. The President seeks to double the number of Peace Corps Volunteers throughout the world, from the current level of 7,000 to 14,000 volunteers in FY07.

Mr. Speaker, Peace Corps Volunteers, enriched by their experiences overseas, have brought their communities throughout the United States a deeper understanding of other cultures and traditions, thereby bringing a domestic dividend to our nation.

National Peace Corps Day recognizes the work of returned Peace Corps Volunteers as they bring their experiences to work, school, places of worship and recreation, sharing with colleagues, friends and community members how their volunteer service changed and shaped their lives.

Mr. Speaker, National Peace Corps Day honors its Volunteers, past and present, and reaffirms our country's commitment to helping people help themselves throughout the world. I would like to congratulate them for the tremendous, and far too often thankless, work they do to improve the human condition.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION MAKING AERIAL FIREFIGHTERS ELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL DEATH BENEFITS

HON. BARBARA CUBIN

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, in April 1997, John Hirth of Buffalo, Wyoming, and his co-pilot lost their lives when their air tanker crashed near Blandburg, Pennsylvania. They were on a firefighting mission for a government agency, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry.

At the time, John was making an aerial scouting of the fire, referred to as a dry run. Fire conditions were gusty, and turbulent wind patterns resulted from the fire itself.

Immediately after dropping the fire retardant, their tanker encountered smoke which affected visibility.

Just as the air tanker flew out of the smoke, its right wing hit an oak tree which stood above the tree line. The aircraft rolled 90 degrees left and flew into the mountainside a quarter mile from the initial tree strike, exploding on impact and instantly killing John and his co-pilot.

In the mid-1990s, John tried to obtain life insurance through various agencies. He was turned down due to his occupation as an aerial firefighter.

At the time of his death, the business still had to meet payments on the 1997 fire contract operation (which included liability insurance, contract-paid pilots, fuel, oil, parts, etc.), as well as on a second tanker and one sprayer aircraft.

The financial loss from this crash was so devastating that his wife, Connie, did not have the money to pay for her husband's funeral.

While this is heartbreaking to us, it is a very stark reality that many families face when aerial firefighters are lost in the line of duty. There were seven fatalities last year alone involving air tankers and fire suppression helicopters.

The fact is that the vast majority of those pilots lost were serving under a government contract at the time. They were providing aerial fire suppression services for the government when they lost their lives.

My reason for being here today is to correct a provision in law that is blatantly unfair.

I am introducing legislation that will provide some financial security to aerial firefighters and their families.

This legislation recognizes all pilots and crew involved in aerial fire suppression as public safety officers. In doing so, the bill makes these deserving individuals eligible for death benefits under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program, also known as PSOB.

Under current law, aerial firefighters who are under contract with the government are not afforded these benefits simply because they work for private companies that contract with the government.

However, without these contract pilots and crew, the federal government would not have the capabilities to deal with wild land fires.

This legislation is a matter of common sense. Aerial firefighters are public safety officers in every sense of the word. With dedication and enthusiasm, they protect our natural resources, our communities, and often our very lives.

Every day, when our men and women in the Armed Forces go out to do their job, they say to us, ''I am willing to risk my life for you today.'' Our local police officers say it as well and, yes my friends, so too do aerial firefighters.

John Hirth was the primary wage earner in his air tanker business and his family. If PSOB had been available to them at the time of John's death, the financial hardships endured by his wife could have been minimized.

It is time we start giving back to aerial firefighters because, if we don't, we will be losing a valuable resource. With no aerial firefighters to protect our natural resources, where will we turn?

I don't think any of us want to face that question, so let's make sure we don't. Please support this legislation. It is the right thing to do.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE PROTECTION AMENDMENT

HON. FRANK D. LUCAS

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, today, I reintroduced the bill that I introduced last Congress in response to the absurd ruling made by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals which declared school recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional. Immediately upon hearing of this atrocious decision in June of last year, I began drafting my bill, the ''Pledge of Allegiance Protection Amendment,'' which would amend the U.S. Constitution to protect the right of schools to lead willing students in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Speaker, I believe children in schools across America should start their day the same way we do here in Congress, by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The court decision has set a dangerous precedent that we cannot allow to continue nationwide. I know of no better way to educate our children about the beliefs we stand for in this great country of ours than with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge is an important way of educating our children about the value of patriotism and democracy and a reminder that we are one nation, under God. That is why I believe we need to keep the Pledge in our schools and keep judges who don't value the Pledge out of our courts.

As it stands now, a temporary stay has been placed on the effect of the ruling until the full panel of the Ninth Circuit reviews the case. I would prefer not to have to amend the Constitution unless it is absolutely necessary to do so, and it is my hope that the courts will overturn this ridiculous ruling. However, if they do not, then I have my bill ready to go to protect the Pledge of Allegiance in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, I urge your support of this bill and yield back the remainder of my time.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO MARTHA MOORE ON THE OCCASION OF HER 35TH ANNIVERSARY AS OHIO REPUBLICAN PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN AND OHIO COMMITTEEWOMAN TO THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to pay special tribute to an outstanding lady from Ohio. Martha Moore was born in Cambridge, Ohio, located in Guernsey County. The daughter of former 15 District Congressman C. Ellis Moore, she was raised in the tradition of commitment to one's family, faith in God, and responsible public service.

Miss Moore attended Wellesley College and received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Muskingum College. She earned her Master of Arts from The Ohio State University. While serving as a professor in the Department of Communications at Muskingum College, she helped to shape the lives of generations of students through her thoughtful tutelage. In 1986, Miss Moore was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award from Muskingum College and was also inducted into the Guernesy County Hall of Fame.

Miss Moore was first elected to the Ohio Republican State Central and Executive Committee in 1950, and currently serves as committeewoman from the 30th Senate District in

Ohio. She previously served as committeewoman from the 15th, 17th, and 18th Congressional Districts. In 1968, Miss Moore was elected Vice Chairman of the Ohio Republican Party (ORP) and Ohio Committeewoman to the Republican National Committee. This year marks the 35th anniversary of her election to both posts. She has been re-elected to both positions at each succeeding organizational meeting of the State Committee.

Miss Moore has been a Delegate or Alternate Delegate to every Republican National Convention since 1972. In 1972, 1976, and 1984, she was selected by the State Committee as Ohio's second choice for President.

As Ohio's National Committeewoman, Miss Moore has served on the Committee on Arrangements since 1984. She has been a member of the Convention's Committee on Call (1972), the Committee on Contests (1976), and the Rules Committee (1980). She was also Chairman of the Subcommittee for Tickets and Badges for the 1992 and 1996 Republican National Conventions.

Ohio is certainly blessed by Martha Moore's continuing service to the American political process. Her wisdom, honesty, and forthrightness are attributes to which all public servants should aspire. She has set an example for everyone on how to live a life of service, putting the greater interests of the community before her own.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to Martha Moore. Our communities are served well by having such honorable and giving citizens, like Martha, who care about their well being and stability. On the 35th anniversary of her election to these two preeminent posts, we wish her all the best as we pay tribute to one of our nation's finest citizens.

DISTRIBUTED POWER HYBRID ENERGY ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Distributed Power Hybrid Energy Act. This bill would direct the Secretary of Energy to develop and implement a strategy for research, development, demonstration, and commercial application of distributed power hybrid energy systems.

Distributed power is modular electric generation or storage located close to the point of use, well suited for the use of renewable energy technologies such as wind turbines and photovoltaics, and also of clean, efficient, fossil-fuel technologies such as gas turbines and fuel cells.

Distributed power can avoid the need for and cost of additional transmission lines and pipelines, reduce associated delivery losses, and increase energy efficiency. In addition, distributed power can provide insurance against energy disruptions and expand the available energy service choices for consumers.

By their very nature, renewable resources are distributed. Our ability to cost-effectively take advantage of our renewable, indigenous resources can be greatly advanced through systems that minimize the intermittency of these resources. Distributed power hybrid systems can help accomplish this.

''Hybridizing'' distributed power systems—combining two or more renewable sources or a renewable and a fossil source—enables us to offset the weaknesses of one technology with the strengths of another. For example, in a hybrid system, the intermittency of wind power can be offset by the reliability and affordability of power generated by a microturbine.

My bill would direct the Secretary of Energy to develop a distributed power hybrid systems strategy identifying opportunities for and barriers to such systems, technology gaps that need to be closed, and system integration tools that are necessary to plan, design, build and operate such systems.

Mr. Speaker, distributed generation represents the most significant technological change in the electric industry in decades. Knowing this, it makes sense to focus our R&D priorities on distributed power hybrid systems that can both help improve power reliability and affordability and bring more efficiency and cleaner energy resources into the mix. My bill would help us do this. I look forward to working with Members of the House to move forward with this important initiative.

For the benefit of my colleagues, I've attached a fact sheet that explains the bill in more detail.

THE DISTRIBUTED POWER HYBRID ENERGY ACT FACT SHEET

The Distributed Power Hybrid Energy Act would direct the Secretary of Energy to develop and implement a strategy for research, development, demonstration, and commercial application of distributed power hybrid energy systems.

BACKGROUND

Distributed power is modular electric generation or storage located close to the point of use. Distributed systems include biomass-based generators, combustion turbines, concentrating solar power and photovoltaic systems, fuel cells, wind turbines, microturbines, engines/generator sets, and storage and control technologies. Distributed resources can either be grid connected or operate independently of the grid. In contrast to large, central-station power plants, distributed power systems typically range from less than a kilowatt (kW) to tens of megawatts (MW) in size.

Distributed power is well suited for the use of renewable energy technologies such as wind turbines and photovoltaics, and also of clean, efficient, fossil-fuel technologies such as gas turbines and fuel cells.

Many benefits can be realized by producing electricity and heat closer to the customer and integrating these distributed energy resources with our traditional central-station generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure. Combined heat and power systems at industrial plants or commercial buildings can be three times more efficient than conventional central generating stations. When facilities such as hospitals and businesses with computers or other critical electronic technology can get power from either the grid or their own generating equipment, energy reliability and security are greatly improved.

Distributed power can avoid the need for and cost of additional transmission lines and pipelines, reduce associated delivery losses, and increase energy efficiency. In addition, distributed power can provide insurance against energy disruptions and expand the available energy service choices for consumers.

Since 1998, the Department of Energy's Distributed Power Program has been working to reduce barriers to the widespread adoption of distributed energy resources. One area of research that has so far not received the attention it deserves, however, is distributed power hybrid systems.

By their very nature, renewable resources are distributed. Our ability to cost-effectively take advantage of our renewable, indigenous resources can be greatly advanced through systems that minimize the intermittency of these resources. Distributed power hybrid systems can help accomplish this.

''Hybridizing'' distributed power systems—combining two or more renewable sources or a renewable and a fossil source—enables us to offset the weaknesses of one technology with the strengths of another. For example, in a hybrid system, the intermittency of wind power can be offset by the reliability and affordability of power generated by a microturbine. Distributed power hybrid systems also have the potential for fuel flexibility—for instance, using biofuels for distributed power systems such as gas turbines and fuel cells. In addition, hybrid systems can be developed to serve multiple uses, such as combined heat and power, offering the opportunity to provide reliable energy services at lower cost.

LEGISLATION

This legislation would direct the Secretary of Energy to develop a distributed power hybrid systems strategy identifying opportunities for and barriers to such systems, technology gaps that need to be closed, and system integration tools that are necessary to plan, design, build and operate such systems. This strategy might provide for the development of system integration tools for developing such systems; tests of distributed power hybrid systems, including field tests with industry and cost-shared demonstrations of such systems to validate performance; data to characterize grid operations, including interconnection requirements; and precise resource assessment tools to map local resources for distributed power hybrid systems.

The legislation calls for the implementation of the plan over five years, along with its integration into the Department of Energy's Office of Distributed Energy Resources. The bill would also require an annual report on the use of and experience with distributed power hybrid systems, in addition to identifying the remaining R&D issues to ensure the successful application of these systems.

To carry out the bill's requirements, the bill would authorize $60 million over fiscal years 2004 through 2008.

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN SCIENTISTS

SPEECH OF

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2003

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague, Mr. CUMMINGS for reserving this special order to celebrate Black History Month, a commemoration that dates back to 1926 when Black Americans celebrated Negro History Week.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the citizens of the United States, especially young African-Americans, recognize how we've grown and developed since then. And also realize and